

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 308 493

CS 009 728

TITLE Secondary School Reading: A Position Statement from the International Reading Association.

INSTITUTION International Reading Association, Newark, Del.

PUB DATE 89

NOTE 7p.

AVAILABLE FROM Public Information Office, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Rd., P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139 (single copies free).

PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Educational Trends; *Inservice Teacher Education; Integrated Curriculum; Language Arts; *Literacy; Position Papers; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Research; Secondary Education; *Secondary School Curriculum

IDENTIFIERS *International Reading Association

ABSTRACT

This position statement recommends changes for secondary school reading programs and suggests that reading instruction be taught throughout all years of schooling if students are to become successfully functioning citizens. The paper (1) explores the changing concept of reading; (2) addresses the integration of the language processes; (3) discusses reading as a complex task; (4) examines the increasing literacy demands of society; (5) emphasizes the importance of teacher preparation programs and staff development efforts; and (6) makes recommendations that will enable educational leaders to realize the importance of a continuing emphasis on the development of literacy in all subject areas. (RS)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED308493

A Position Statement from the International Reading Association on

SECONDARY SCHOOL READING

Large numbers of students leave school today not having acquired a level of literacy adequate for using information from print as a basis for making intelligent choices about complex issues. Thus, attention to reading instruction throughout the years of schooling is essential if citizens are to function constructively and participate as knowledgeable decision-makers and independent learners with a variety of printed materials. Recent theory and research in the comprehension process provide a valuable foundation for evaluating current practices in reading instruction and for planning more effective reading programs. This statement will:

Explore the changing concept of reading

Address the integration of the language processes

Discuss reading as a complex task

Examine the increasing literacy demands of society

Emphasize the importance of teacher preparation programs and staff development efforts

Make recommendations that will enable educational leaders to realize the importance of a continuing emphasis on the development of literacy in all subject areas

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. W. Kline, IRA

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

8265005D

Concept of Reading

Reading is now viewed as a process in which the reader actively integrates new information from text with experience and existing knowledge within a variety of learning contexts (settings/situations) in an attempt to make sense of print. To accomplish this, the reader must be able to make connections between what is known and what is being read. Further, the reader must know and apply a variety of strategies which facilitate the process of learning and remembering, thus making use of important information through personal and critical response.

Insights reveal the act of reading as a complex and subtle process which goes far beyond fragmented lists of skills usually taught and tested sequentially. Current information on how students learn and how effective instructional techniques can mediate this process creates important implications for instruction. However, much of the reading research has been conducted in elementary settings. There is a need for more research at the middle school, secondary school, and adult levels, and for direct application of research findings to instruction at those levels.

Integration With Other Language Processes

The reading process does not occur in isolation: All language processes—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—work together. In addition, reading comprehension functions within a context of meaning, such as the subject matter of a content area. Students need to be taught comprehension strategies using meaningful materials, not contrived selections written to focus on specific skills training. When comprehension instruction takes place with other language processes in subject matter settings, students become strategic learners who integrate and apply their knowledge across the curriculum. This view of reading comprehension goes far beyond the traditional idea that reading is a discrete set of skills which, once mastered, is automatically applied and transferred to any reading situation.

A Complex Task

Three major factors which make reading a particularly complex task are:

1. Reading strategies developed in the early years are applied and transferred to many learning and social contexts. As students progress through the grades, they encounter increasingly difficult material. Many of their reading assignments involve expository material with varied and complex patterns of organization—a major change from the emphasis on narrative material in the elementary school. The ideas which must be comprehended become increasingly more abstract and more numerous.
2. Academic tasks and real world demands require middle and secondary students to apply reading competencies independently. Students must do more with what they read. They are expected to read longer selections independently, to organize information, and to do expanded homework assignments based on their reading. They must be able to take notes, combine information from the teacher with information from text, and answer questions or perform tasks which show that they can interpret and integrate concepts independently. These tasks require complex reading and thinking behaviors.
3. Commonly used traditional standardized tests with comparative scores and percentiles or number of objectives passed are based on a discrete skill concept of reading. Recognizing the complexity of reading/language components influencing comprehension, we must continue to examine and investigate new ways to monitor student progress using a much broader range of factors to obtain a global view of progress in literacy maturity. Reading assessment needs to address the student's knowledge of the reading process as it applies to a wider variety of materials and purposes. Both programs and assessment need to focus on this more complex view of reading and reading comprehension. Then, instructors can adjust programs accordingly.

Students need to be taught explicitly how to apply what they know about reading to a wide variety of reading tasks in content areas and in the world of work. In addition, they need the opportunity to experience reading as a pleasurable activity which will expand their personal worlds. Thus, it is essential that reading processing instruction be an integral part of the curriculum from the elementary through secondary level and that student progress be monitored throughout the grades. Students will then receive the necessary support as they meet varied reading tasks across the curriculum and beyond the classroom.

Increasing Demands of Society

In order to remain productive in the work force, everyone must stay abreast of new information and skills. Job competency requires the critical evaluation, organization, and synthesis of diverse information. In addition, whereas content area reading involves information processing, work related reading involves large amounts of problem solving for entry level, managerial, and executive reading tasks. These literacy skills are expected to be taught in elementary school at a level appropriate to the developmental stage of students. However, it is not possible for any student to attain reading maturity in the elementary school.

Literate citizens know the content and structure of a wide variety of materials which they can read for personal, recreational, and vocational needs. In addition, our citizens are challenged and encouraged to apply their reading skills in tandem with other problem solving abilities to meet societal needs. Ultimately, literate citizens need to be engaged in the lifelong process of building and refining their abilities to read. Future secondary reading programs must be reorganized to establish the foundations for building reading habits, motivational enticements, and application skills for using reading to meet the demands of society.

Teacher Preparation Programs and Staff Development

Instructional techniques and learning strategies reflected in current research must be an integral part of quality programs that prepare teachers to work with elementary, middle, and secondary school students in academic, vocational, and adult reading tasks. Encouragement of teachers as researchers and stronger training in the practical aspects of reading/language development, particularly at the secondary level, involving activities in modeling, interaction, discussion, and reading/writing activities are needed.

Preparation and staff development programs need to stress experiences with books and practical reading and writing activities. Because reading materials are organized differently and the use of language in each content area is unique, preparation for helping students learn successfully from texts needs to be provided for content teachers as well as reading teachers. Teacher preparation programs and staff development efforts need to emphasize a more active role in the learning and reading/language process. They need to emphasize that career-long opportunities for growth, renewal, and access to new information are essential to professional growth in reading knowledge and practices.

Summary Statements

Students face new challenges in reading/language processing each year as they progress through the grades. As educators, we must provide the support necessary to allow students to be successful in all subject areas as they read, monitor, question, rethink, reflect, and elaborate upon the ideas and information in their reading/language experiences. Global assessments of student progress, including strengths and accomplishments as well as weaknesses, provide more complete direction for offering the best reading/language programs. Schools must equip students with the critical and evaluative reading and language processing capabilities that will be useful throughout their lives.

Recommendations

Therefore, the International Reading Association makes the following recommendations based on the concept of reading:

That school districts provide staff development opportunities, such as classroom action research and peer coaching, for applying reading/language processing strategies across the curriculum

That teacher preparation programs/state education departments be urged to require all education majors preparing to teach at the secondary level to complete at least a three semester credit course in content area reading/language processing across the curriculum

That teachers be prepared to help students in all content areas and at all grade levels to:

- Integrate reading with other language processes as they read to learn

- Use reading as a valuable recreational, leisure time activity

- Become effective independent learners by

 - activating prior knowledge and building background information for the reading situation

 - organizing information for learning and remembering

 - monitoring, self-questioning, and focusing attention during reading

 - seeing the relationship between reading activities and the reader's purpose for reading

 - using a variety of reading strategies and knowing when it is appropriate to use them

- Learn at a level of sophistication and independence appropriate for the concepts being studied

That administrators and teachers in secondary level education be urged to give students adequate opportunities to continue learning and extending higher level reading/writing experiences

That research efforts be encouraged and expanded to:

- Examine and explore new ways to assess and monitor readers' progress

- Describe the strategies of effective readers in secondary schools, readers whose language processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking work together

This statement was prepared by the Reading/Language through the Years Subcommittee on Secondary Schools and adopted by the IRA Board of Directors at its Spring 1989 meeting.

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION
800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA



NEWS RELEASE**International Reading Association**

Association Internationale pour la Lecture
Asociación Internacional de Lectura

800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139
Newark, Delaware 19714-8139, USA

Contact: Patricia Du Bois, Public Information Associate
(302) 731-1600, ext. 14, (302) 764-9211

For Release: July 17, 1989

**READING ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDS CHANGES IN
SECONDARY SCHOOL READING**

NEWARK, DEL -- The International Reading Association (IRA) has adopted a position statement recommending changes for secondary school reading programs. Prepared by the Reading/Language through the Years Subcommittee on Secondary Schools, it suggests that reading instruction be taught throughout all years of schooling if students are to become successfully functioning citizens.

To meet these needs, the Association recommends that:

- School districts provide staff development opportunities.
- Education majors complete courses in content area reading/language processing across the curriculum.
- Teachers be prepared to help students integrate reading in all grade levels and content areas, and instruction be designed to help students become effective independent learners.
- Students be provided higher level reading/writing experiences.
- Research efforts be encouraged and expanded.

This position statement also explores the changing concept of reading as revealed by the latest research; addresses the importance of the integration of the language processes; describes reading as a complex process, not a set of discrete skills; examines the increasing literacy demands of society; emphasizes the importance of teacher preparation programs and staff development efforts, and makes specific recommendations for the improvement of teaching and literacy

-more-

ira

6

An Incorporated Nonprofit Professional Organization

This statement was adopted by the IRA Board of Directors at its spring 1989 meeting. Single copies may be obtained by contacting the Public Information Office, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19714-8139, telephone (302) 731-1600, ext. 15; Fax: (302) 731-1057.

The International Reading Association is an 87,000-member, nonprofit educational organization devoted to the promotion of literacy and making reading a lifetime habit.

###